



Appendix 8: Draft discussion document: Proposed changes to amend the Education Review Office's mandate

Have your say about amending the Education Review Office's (EROs) mandate to enable it to review professional learning and development accessed by schools, kura and early learning services

Proposal

High quality professional learning and development (PLD) is an important lever to support teachers, kaiako, teacher-aides and leaders to strengthen their individual and collective capabilities throughout their careers, respond to emerging needs within the system and make a difference for every ākonga and their whānau.

PLD is provided through a range of mechanisms. Most is funded by the government, but schools, kura and early childhood settings also resource some PLD directly themselves.

We would like a better understanding of how PLD provision helps to improve teaching practice and enhance student learning.

To do this, the government is proposing to expand ERO's functions to enable it to review the quality of the PLD accessed by schools, kura and early learning services.

Currently, the Education and Training Act 2020 sets the scope of ERO's functions as being to review every education service owned, operated or funded by government, other than services provided only to students over 16 who are not enrolled in a State school. Therefore, the Act would need to be amended to allow ERO to review professional learning and development accessed by schools, kura and early learning services.

Background

There is clear evidence that teaching practice makes a significant difference to student engagement, learning, and progress, and that teachers can improve and develop their practice throughout their careers. High quality professional learning and development is an important way to support teachers, kaiako, teacher-aides and educational leaders to develop the skills, knowledge and dispositions needed to meet each learner's needs and contribute to wider system goals.

The current situation

Current role and mandate of the Education Review Office

The Education Review Office is the New Zealand government department that, as per [section 463](#) of the Act evaluates and reports on the education and care of students in schools and early learning services. [Section 463](#) gives the Chief Review Officer (CRO) the power to administer reviews, and [section 622](#) enables review officers to conduct inspections or make inquiries of applicable organisations. Under [section 463](#), the CRO must report to the Minister on these reviews. ERO publishes its findings on the provision of education to all young New Zealanders where that education service is owned, operated or funded by government, other than services provided only to students over 16 who are not enrolled in a State school.

As well as reviewing schools and early learning services, ERO carries out research and evaluation that looks at how the education system supports learners to achieve positive outcomes. Under [section 465](#), the CRO designates 'suitably qualified persons' as review officers to review schools and early learning services, as well as specialists in Kura Kaupapa Māori, and Pacific Bilingual Education.

Current provision of professional learning and development to schools, kura and early learning services

Professional learning and development for educators is provided through a range of mechanisms. Most is funded by government either through the Ministry of Education, other government agencies or schools' operational grants. Alongside this, schools, kura, and early childhood settings resource some PLD directly themselves.

Quality assurance of professional learning and development

To quality assure government-funded PLD, providers are selected based on their proven ability to deliver PLD services in a sustainable, user-focused manner that meets government priorities and those of individual early learning services, schools and kura.

PLD providers employ facilitators who have appropriate subject expertise. The Ministry has developed a refreshed process to assure quality in the PLD workforce for English and Māori medium settings, in consultation with PLD providers and other representative groups. This is currently being implemented. Additionally, the Teacher Refresher Course Committee helps Networks of Expertise, subject associations, and other peer-to-peer networks to deliver quality professional learning and development for educators.

We are working to strengthen our approaches to the review of PLD through impact reporting in contractual arrangements and the frameworks for schools, kura and early learning services to self-assess their growth within the Ministry's PLD platform.

While each of these helps assure that PLD providers are meeting quality standards, we don't have good information about how PLD provision works with other parts of the education system to improve teaching practice and improve learner outcomes –either at a national level, or within individual schools, kura or early learning services.

Question:

Do you agree it would be good to have a centrally organized way of looking at how the PLD accessed by schools, kura and early learning services impacts on teaching practice and student learning?

Proposed solution – extending ERO's mandate to review education services accessed by schools, kura and early learning services

We are proposing to expand ERO's mandate in the Education and Training Act 2020 to enable it to review professional learning and development accessed by schools, kura and early learning services, and thereby improve the quality and coherence of these services.

ERO is well-placed to review PLD accessed by schools, kura and early learning services as it has a strong understanding of best teaching practice in its current role of reviewing these places of learning. ERO may need to develop new evidence-based evaluation indicators but is experienced

in developing these in partnership with communities and stakeholders. Reviewing PLD would also fit with ERO's system evaluation function.

Types of issues ERO could look at are:

- how PLD providers contribute to improving teacher practice in delivering parts of the curriculum (e.g. science | putaiao, mathematics | pāngarau)
- how PLD providers contribute to improving teacher practice with different groups of students (e.g. culturally responsive practice)
- how well PLD provision on a specific curriculum area or priority is being implemented across the country
- which PLD providers are most effective in helping improve teaching practice, and which need more support

This change would not allow ERO to review Initial Teacher Education (ITE), or any other tertiary education courses or programmes that sit within the New Zealand Qualifications Framework because other mechanisms are in place for quality assuring tertiary education provision.

ERO would be able to make recommendations, but the contracting decisions would remain with schools and the Ministry of Education.

There is a risk that spreading ERO's capability across a new area could draw resources from its core function of reviewing schools and early learning services. ERO proposes to manage this by incorporating this new function into its existing school, kura, and early learning service reviews. Initially, ERO would review the impact of PLD provision as part of the Te Ihuwaka - Education Evaluation Centre work that ERO already conducts with schools, kura and early learning centres. In the future ERO could review a specific provider if concerns were raised about its PLD provision through these evaluations.

We want to hear your views on whether there is a need for a more systematic arrangement of quality assurance for professional learning and development accessed by schools, kura and early learning services, whether ERO is the agency best placed to do this, advantages and disadvantages of this proposed solution, and other suggestions you may have.

Questions:

Q1. Do you agree with the proposed solution? Why or why not?

Q2. How would the expansion of ERO's mandate to review professional learning and development impact on you?

Q3. Are there other options for ensuring systematic review of PLD accessed by schools, kura and early learning services?

How to have your say

We are seeking your views on the proposal to extend ERO's mandate to review professional learning and development accessed by schools, kura and early learning services. You can email your submissions to legislation.consultation@education.govt.nz or write to:

Education Consultation
Ministry of Education
PO Box 1666
Wellington 6140
New Zealand

Submissions close on 16 June 2021 and will inform advice to the Minister and Associate Minister of Education on final policy proposals that would be submitted to Cabinet.

Purpose of feedback

We are seeking your views on the suggested changes discussed above. Your feedback will enable us to make better informed decisions about possible changes to enable ERO to review professional learning and development accessed by schools, kura and early learning services.

Please be assured that any feedback you provide will be confidential to those involved in analysing the consultation data. We will not identify any individuals in the final analysis and report writing unless you expressly give permission for this. However, submissions, including submitters' names, and documents associated with the consultation process may be subject to an Official Information Act 1982 request.